

CONNECTICUT-ISRAEL EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Members of the Government Administration and Election Committee, my name is Sandra Elias, and I am the Executive Director of CONNIX, a volunteer position. I speak today on behalf of Steven Sohn, Governor Rell's Designee as Chairperson of the Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission (CONNIX) as well as at the request of Robert J. Fishman, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT). Mr. Fishman is out of town at a family wedding and was unable to attend.

I respectfully urge the committee to reject HB 6375, which seeks to terminate certain commissions. CONNIX's mission is to promote economic, cultural and educational exchange between the State of Connecticut and the State of Israel. From its inception in 1993, CONNIX has been a resource for Connecticut businesses exploring Israel and the Mid-East region. In addition to aiding companies in marketing their products to Israel, CONNIX has also provided Connecticut companies with new sourcing requests from Israel. Israel has superb research and academic centers that generate sophisticated and innovative solutions in the areas of hi-tech, biotech, pharmaceutical, aerospace, 'green' technology and stem cell research and development. CONNIX, through its connections with a variety of Israeli governmental and business sources, solicits and receives information on joint venture projects and then researches and identifies Connecticut companies to bid on or pursue specific business projects.

During its existence, CONNIX has facilitated and/or assisted in many deals between Connecticut and Israeli companies which has brought hundreds of thousands of dollars to Connecticut business. These include Transwitch (Shelton) The Bodine Corporation (Bridgeport) Rome Fastener (Milford), Algonquin Parts (South Norwalk) just to name a few. At this time we are working with Israel's Economic Minister of North America, who met the Governor in her office in January. He is bringing a group of Israeli Homeland Security technology companies to New York. CONNIX is in the process of arranging for Connecticut companies to meet with their Israeli counterparts for possible joint ventures. These benefits come to the State of Connecticut without cost, as there has been no state funding for CONNIX for more than five years. CONNIX has continued to work diligently to encourage economic, cultural, and educational connections between Connecticut and Israel. Accordingly, we urge you to reject HB 6375. Thank you.